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County Life

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0 Christmas Tree
Reminisce on past Christmases with Gail Stelteron pages 2 and 3.

Christmas at the farm
See photos from Snowflake Meadows' holiday event on page 4.

Return of Repair Cafe
See when you can get beloved broken items repaired on page 7.

The King came to town on Friday, Nov. 17 to perform at the Haliburton United Church, swaying hips and swooning the crowd. Garry Wesley paid tribute to Elvis Presley at Elvis in Concert. /TIM YANO Special to *County Life*

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Writing on the Senior Side

Children add ornaments to the vilalge Christmas tree during a past Haliburton Santa Claus Parade. /FILE

County Life

The following inserts are being distributed with County Life this week:

Canadian Tire *

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Shoppers Drug Mart Haliburton *

Todd's Independent *

All inserts are to selected distribution areas.

For information on how your flyer can be inserted each week in County Life please contact Melissa Armstrong at **613-332-2002** or **melissa@haliburtonpress.com**

O Christmas Tree

GAIL STELTER

Special to *County Life*

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum…

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, how lovely are your branches…

The year of the crooked tree. Well, in those days there were lots of years of crooked trees. The tree stand also didn't work too well. Or maybe that was to be expected as our tree stand was a pail of sand.

"Gates, you hold it while I get some string, a hammer and nails, and we'll attach it to the wall in the rec room."

"Okay, Jimmy. Mom is not going to like the holes in the wall."

"I'll make sure they're small. She won't notice, and we won't tell her."

"She will be happy that you put the tree up for her."

Then there was the year the kitten ripped the wrapping paper and batted and broken the fragile ornaments.

The years of my mom's magnificent wrapping scheme; each present was wrapped when it came into the house. She used colour-coded tissue paper. The attaching of the name tags was Santa's doing. One year Santa forgot the code, I opened my brother's present and he mine.

"It's a girl's watch!"

"It's a guitar book!"

Only took us a minute or two to clue in and hours of teasing and laughter afterwards.

Mom worked at Simpson's, "The Christmas Tree Store". On every counter and high up to the ceiling were beautiful Christmas trees. I grew up inspired by the splendor of Christmas trees. I grew up going to the local Christmas tree lot with my dad picking out our often little and crooked Christmas tree. No high ceilings in our house, especially in the dad-built rec room.

The Balsam fir grows from Newfoundland to Alberta and everywhere in between. It is also the most fragrant of the fir trees. Our tree was always a Scots/Scotch pine. Why? I supposed it was because it was full and beautiful. I supposed it was because it was our tradition. Its needles were sharp, and you had to wear gloves when putting it up and taking it down. Now, I know another reason it was the choice. It rarely sheds its needles and had excellent water retention after being cut. That would have been important to my mom, who was our tree clean-up person.

From childhood to adulthood, parenthood and now seniorhood the Christmas tree is one of the seasonal treasures.

Smiles as I remember the years when all the ornaments were on the first three branches.

Anticipation as we always waited until after our youngest daughter's birthday, which is exactly two weeks before Christmas, to get our tree.

Singing Christmas songs - Anne Murray's Christmas tape or CD - as we made our way up Highway 25 to

see page 3

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Writing on the Senior Side

from page 2

Highway 24 somewhere near Erin, I think. The children choose a new ornament and enjoy this family-oriented tree nursery that includes free hot chocolate or hot apple cider and cookies.

For years I tried to teach them to hang the icicles on one or two at a time. They started fine, and then when they thought I didn't see them, they threw them on by the handfuls. I gave up.

The year of the snowsuits, toboggan and a saw: we went to the Christmas tree farm and chopped down our tree. The years of the sleigh ride out to the forest to choose a tree.

How about the year the tree outing began with a drive to Waterloo to take back my books from the Wilfred Laurier University Library?

"Look, those Mennonites sure look cold in the horse and carriage."

Later, "More Mennonites. Lots more. It must be time for their church service."

"Dad, the snow is getting deeper. Are you sure we are going in the right direction?

"Yes."

"More Mennonites. Dad, I think we are heading further away from Milton."

"I think he is right, Dad. Not many houses out here."

"Peter, it's getting dark. I think we should turn around."

Home safe but no tree on that outing.

The year, with all of us in fits of laughter, when our adult son decided some of the never sentimental just old tacky ornaments should be thrown in the fire and in they went! Cheers!

And finally, the year we are getting ready to go to the Festival of Trees and a little one comes downstairs and says, "When are we going to the Festival of Cheese! I've never been to a Festival of Cheese."

How do you decide on your Christmas tree? How tall is it? Are the needles staying on? Does the dog keep drinking the water as he almost knocks it over? Does your cat drink the water and climb the tree? Where did you get it? Which one is the nicest? How much did yours cost? But really, who cares about all these questions? No one, it's just part of the Christmas tree banter. They are all perfect, decorated with love and laughter and so many memories.

Is it real? In the 60s, 70s, and 80s, artificial trees just didn't work for many of us. They were skinny and often had big gaps between the limbs. Sometimes they smelled like plastic. Now, however, they are so lovely you can't hardly tell them apart from a real tree. This has resulted in many homes with several trees and what a lovely tradition that can be.

What do you feel when you see a Christmas tree? What is your favourite part or memory?

Haliburton and District Lions Club member Marilyn Frost sings Christmas carols during a past Santa Claus Parade. /FILE

For many years our tree was a Scots pine. I too am a traditionalist. No matter, that Peter's tradition was the Balsam or Fraser fur. It only took him 25 years to get me to make the switch.

From my teenage to my senior side, I have a recollection of a special place. There is a silent dark living room and in it a Christmas tree with its lights aglow.

I am alone. I too am silent. I drift. From teenage worries to wonderous dreams of the future, tears slowly escape. From senior worries about my children and grandchildren to missing my parents and my brother and overwhelming gratitude for a life of love, tears slowly escape. I hope I will go to this place again this year and every year.

A Christmas tree can be a different experience for each of us. No matter what your beliefs or your traditions you can enjoy a Christmas tree. You can feel merry and bright with your own tree or, if you prefer, the one you see in the store, in our town or on a neighbour's lawn. O Christmas tree!

Christmas Toy & Food Drive 2023

Join the Haliburton County Home Builders' Association and help us to make a difference!

As the Christmas season commences, The Haliburton County Home Builders Association would like to encourage you to include its Christmas Challenge in your plans. Large or small, each gift will help fill the Christmas hampers distributed by the Food Banks in Haliburton County. If you aren't sure what to collect simply gather local gift certificates.

Option 1: Call - text 705-457-6901, email info@hchba.ca in advance to arrange a date to pick up your gifts. We will take them to the local distribution centers.

Option 2: Drop off your gifts at one of our partners. We will then pick up from there.

Partners:

Haliburton Chrysler – 13533 Highway 118

Ridgewood Ford – 12560 Highway 35

Other locations in Minden and Haliburton:

Cordell Carpet, Haliburton Home Hardware, Minden Home Hardware, Hudson Henderson Insurance Broker Haliburton/Minden, CIBC Minden, Ommmh, Minden Post Office, TD Bank Minden, Emmerson Lumber Ltd - Maple Ave., Kohara & Co - Industrial Park Rd., Curry Chevrolet Buick GMC

Drop off for the 4C's in Haliburton is Dec 8th and other location Dec 15th

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Seniors Day is the last Thursday of each month

Christmas at the Farm

Kristyn Begbie, the owner and operator of Snowflake Meadows in Minden, hosted the third annual Christmas at the farm, with money going towards the rescue and rehabilitation of animals in the community. Over $1500 was raised, as well as a collection of non-perishables to go towards the local food banks. /TIM YANO special to *County Life*

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Attendees of Art Heaven browse through the selection of art during the exhibit opening.

Rails End Gallery volunteer Toby, left, and gallery curator Laurie Jones, right, stop for a photo during the opening of Art Heaven on Friday, Nov. 17. /BRITNEY PAGLIUCA Staff

Opening night of The Rails End Gallery's Art Heaven

BRITNEY PAGLIUCA

County Life Staff

On Nov. 17, Rails End Gallery and Arts Centre celebrated the opening night of Art Heaven, an art show and sale that features recycled and affordably priced original art pieces.

Curator Laurie Jones stated that the show's basic principle and the gallery's mission is to make art accessible to all. "We have a responsibility to keep art alive in Haliburton," Jones said. The Rails End Gallery can bring art into many more homes through Art Heaven with numerous pieces being priced under 25 dollars.

Some of the artwork for sale includes framed oil paintings, pottery, stained glass, multimedia sculptures, cultural pieces and more.

The exhibit was made possible by donors who gifted original art to the gallery for the purpose of displaying it at Art Heaven and reselling it at an affordable price. "Art is meant and deserves to be loved," Jones said. In this way, the art is not only reused, but rehomed into a space where it has a new opportunity to been seen and appreciated.

All proceeds from the exhibit will help the gallery fund future exhibits, programs and demonstrations. "One sign of a healthy community is to have institutions like public art galleries," Jones said, "they are such an important part of community engagement." Events like Art Heaven enable the Rails End Gallery and Arts Centre to continue using their space to share local art and art education, support local artists and foster an appreciation for art.

The event will continue until Dec. 16 during regular gallery hours – Wednesday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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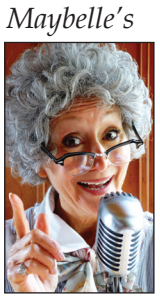
CMCA AUDITED

Christmas in November, don'tcha know

Maybelle's

Fireside stories

WHY, IF it isn't Christmas in November, right here in Lake WhaddayathinkImean, don'tcha know.

Mel Amory's big beautiful Christmas tree was just put up by our Lake W volunteer firefighters right in the village beside Twindle Mumbly's Taxidermy & Habidashery store. And on Friday night, the whole town is going to show up when the lights are plugged in and we all sing "Santa's coming to town," and other fun Christmassy songs. And Margie Billingsmithers is going to serve up her to-live-for homemade hot chocolate with cashew cream and cinnamon topping for the kiddies…and the big kiddies, too, (like ol' Maybelle) who always begs: "Me, too, me, please, me, me." Guess we're all pretty much toddlers in our hearts.

And then, like every year, the Santa Claus parade will come right down our main street with floats and goats … yep, goats … and human candy canes. You should see Vilma Yuccch striped from top to bottom. She came over to show me what we were all in for. It was Vilma who made the costumes herself and a whole gaggle of folks are going to wear them. EVEN

her sweetheart, Officer Stanley Penelope McBottom. Oh, he protested at first. "I'll look silly," he said. "I can't wear that, what will the fellas think?" But it was Vilma's big blue eyes that he always falls into that turned his head in a nano-second. "Yes, Vilma. Yesssssssssssssssssssssssssss."

Funny how we saw Halloween pop up in September. And Easter show up a whole month early, too. Well, I guess we can all use the merriment and goodwill that these special occasions bring.

Why, ol' Maybelle has Christmas lights going all year long at my cottage, don'tcha know.

Just makes me feel good to see my front window surrounded with little twinkly bits. I figure, why wait 'til December? Life's too short and it's the little things that can put a big smile in your heart.

Those twinkly lights are my daily reminder to be as much like them as possible, don'tcha know.

A clue, a cue, to choose the light when it's dark out. To feel the light when you feel a little blue inside. And to choose kindness and caring for our neighbours and friends over thoughts and feelings of ill-will that separate us. To be our own Santa at every opportunity in every way. Giving a smile is a gift and can warm a person, sometimes, even more than a big woolly coat. (But if you have one that you don't need, that's a wonderful gift for somebody, too.).

What ol' Maybelle is saying is this: We don't have to wait 'til Christmas to open our hearts to others. Christmas is a state of heart, don'tcha know. And right now, it's alive and well right here in November!

Maybelle's Fireside Stories is written by Jerelyn Craden. "Maybelle's Cure for What Ails You," 21 of Maybelle's best short stories is now available at www.amazon.com.

Top 10 reasons not to wear your Crocs outside in winter

MOST SPOUSES will tell you that Crocs should not be worn in winter. The weird part is they never tell you why. Well, as always, I have given this some serious thought. And here are the top 10 reasons I can think of.

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

1. You have grown accustomed to having feeling in your toes.
2. They look horrible with a snow suit.
3. Though they work like a downhill skis, they require far more skill.
4. Frankly, chartreuse is not a winter colour.
5. Instagram hashtag "wintercrocs" not gaining traction.
6. Hard to find frostbite bandages that go with them.
7. Road salt is irritating when it gets between your toes.
8. The intervention.
9. They don't make them with winter treads.
10. Santa at the mall made you promise.

Fly

Rivulets of Rain, trickling down the window pane,
lead-bellied clouds, swallowing morning Moon, floating, up there, somewhere, ripening to fullness, again.
My bleary eyes follow the Vee of geese, seeping through the mist,
tiny as the black flies that swarm the windowsill, this time, each year, only one of them, still alive, writhing on its back, unable to fly.
I watch the flecks of geese, opening the window a sliver, shivering as October Air pours in,
listening to the fading honks of geese, flapping over the hills, blotted by fog.
I wonder how much longer they'll remain, whether their wings feel the rawness of Air, as they fly,
or do their feathers buffer them, like a coat, from the cold, as I watch them blur into the blankness of Sky,
listening to fingers of Rain drum on the roof, staring at rivulets of Rain, staining the glass,
reminding me of birches, their spindly spines speckled with droplets of Rain, like the eyes carved into their trunks,
the spaces between the streaks of Rain, smeared with mist, like peering into a distant forest of birches,
as the fog lifts,
and the ghost trees reveal their leafless limbs, their bones, creaking, as they lean into one another,
their leaves, shriveling on the forest floor.
I stare at a fresh rivulet of Rain, droplets trickling down the window pane, painting another birch tree, springing from the mist.
I resist rolling out of bed, preferring to listen to Rain instead, its rhythm, steady as a heartbeat, cloaked in flesh,
yearning to feel the fullness of the world, or muffled in feathers, its wings, soaring through Air,
back towards that place where it can sing.
I linger in bed, watching clouds drift across Sky, like the floaters I sometimes see,
squiggling in front of my eyes,
the mist, lifting, revealing hills, dripping in bronze and gold, Rain, rusting their trees, Wind, cleaving leaves from their branches,
as my eyes sweep across the curves of their spines, silhouettes, curled in a deep sleep.
I glance down at the cluster of flies, crumpled on the windowsill,
the one that was thrashing its wings, now, still.
I wonder about their lifespan, whether it's shorter or longer than the length of time it takes a raindrop to stream down from Sky,
landing on the windowpane, painting a forest of birches, that dissolve into the mist,
as I wipe the window with my hand, scooping the flies from the ledge, dropping them Outside,
Rain, drenching the puddle of crumpled wings, that once buzzed through Air, searching for a place to land.
A fresh fly creeps along the windowpane, but I leave it be, to explore this strange terrain of glass and ceiling and floor,
as I open the door and step Outside, inhaling Air, scrubbed by Rain, grateful to be Alive,
my lifespan shorter than a black fly's, compared to hills and Rivers and Sky.

Sylvie Kalenda

Repair Café bringing holiday cheer this December

Christmas is just around the corner and many are feeling the need to tighten their budget this year. Repair Café can help, by fixing your reusable items and bringing them back to life.

SIRCH Community Services is hosting a Repair Café on Sunday, Dec. 3 at the SIRCH Bistro, from 10am to 2pm. This event is free and welcomes young and old to enjoy a day of tinkering, fun and an opportunity to learn new skills!

Repair Café helps people repair broken items such as small household appliances, toys, electronics, pottery and more. A team of volunteers with an expertise in making things work will be on hand to assess your item and get it working again.

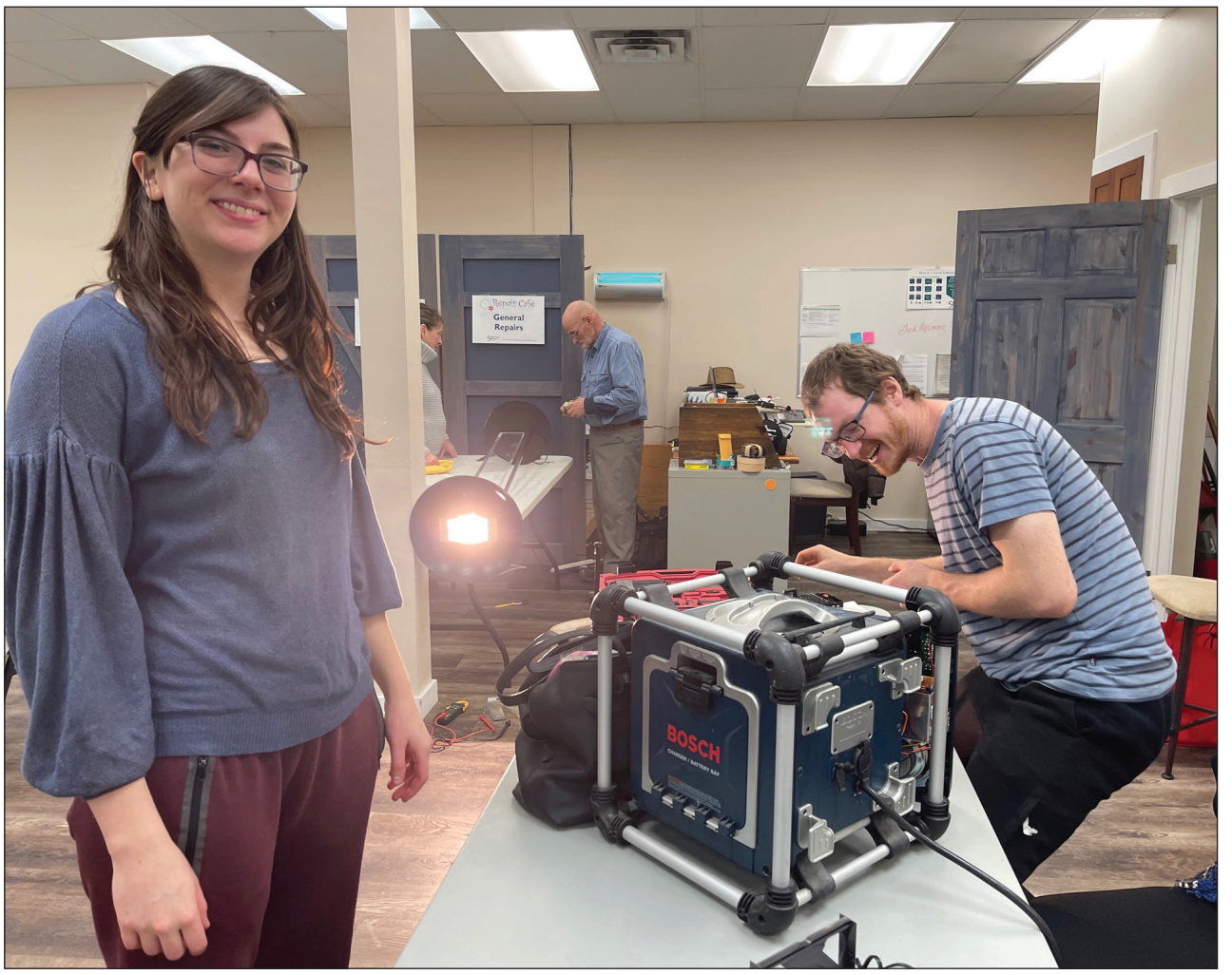
This will mark the fourth Repair Café SIRCH has held this year, all of which have contributed to keeping reusable items out of our local landfills and helping the environment. It also benefits the community by connecting individuals with their neighbours, teaching them new skills and saving people money. And it's all free!

"SIRCH Repair Café wants to help reduce the mountains of waste that our landfills experience. We have gotten used to saying "Oh it's broken, I'll have to buy a new one" when what we'd like is for people to say 'Oh it's broken – I hope it can be repaired'" said Dianne Woodcock, Repair Café coordinator. "Many of us have forgotten that so many things can be repaired and SIRCH Repair Café wants to change that"

And if you have children, you won't want to miss out on the Tinker Table! In partnership with the Haliburton County Public Library, the Tinker Table allows kids to use their imaginations and try their hand at fixing things. On Dec. 3, the Tinker Table will feature maker toys including Snap Circuits and 3D pens.

The SIRCH Bistro is located at 49 Maple Ave., in Haliburton, next door to Emmerson Lumber. For more information call 705-457-1742 or email info@sirch.on.ca.

Submitted



If you have an item that no longer works, bring it to the next Repair Cafe, happening on Dec. 3 at the SIRCH Bistro, located at 49 Maple Ave. in Haliburton. Repair Cafe is an initiative of SIRCH Community Services that allows you to have items fixed for free by volunteer fixers. And don't forget to bring your kids along to let them play at the Tinker Table. /Photo submitted

Legion Events

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge every Monday, 1 p.m. Schofield Rm.
Tuesdays: League darts starting at 7 p.m. Haliburton Army Cadets practice 6:30 to 9 p.m. (Sept to June)
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo starts at 7 p.m. $500. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, starting at 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend. Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Meat draw has five draws, five prizes each draw, first draw at 4:30 p.m., last draw at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are $2 per draw. Ed Pickard, MC.
Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m.
Saturdays: 50/50 Draw 4 p.m. draw – tickets are $1 each available in the Clubroom.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, for more information call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Come on out and support Haliburton Legion Branch 129 ... everyone is welcome!
Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m. and Sat. 3 to 6 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

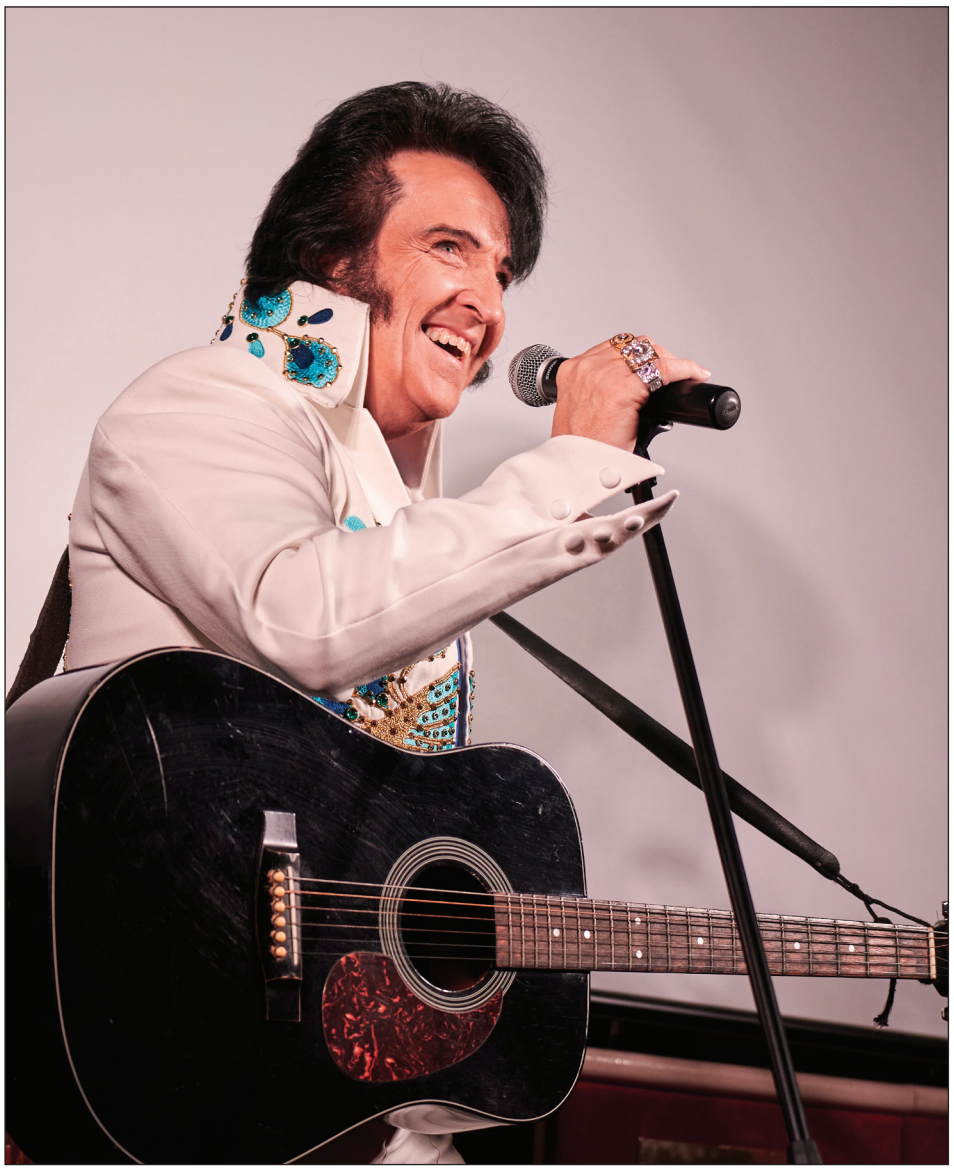
Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m.,Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Every other Friday Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541
Schedules are subject to change without notice. Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Wilberforce

Nov. 30 - 2 to 6 p.m.
Dec. 1 - Fish/Chips 5-8pm
Dec. 2 - 2 to 6 p.m. Meat Draw 3 p.m.
Dec. 3 to 5 - Closed
Dec. 5 - Executive Meeting 7p.m.
Dec.r 6 - 2 to 6 p.m. Darts 2 p.m.
Tree of Warmth at Branch 624 is now accepting donations for the Cardiff and Wilberforce elementary school children. Homemade, store bought socks, scarves, mittens, gloves and socks would be appreciated for Grades JK to 8. Take your donations to the Wilberforce Legion, Wednesdays to Saturdays 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. or drop off at Agnews General store. If you are planning an event our Ladies Auxiliary would be pleased to cater. Please call the branch at 705-448-2221 to arrange your event.

All shook up

Garry Wesley performed as Elvis Presley during a tribute concert held at the Haliburton United Church on Friday, Nov. 17. /TIM YANO Special to *County Life*



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Foodbank
Christmas Assistance Program 2023

Call in for Christmas will be from Mon Nov 20 to Sat Dec 2th Between 11am & 1 pm

Food Bank number is 705 457-3010

Pickup day is Dec 14th between 10 am & 2 pm At The LilyAnn Thrift Store

Black Sheep Books - A small business helping small businesses

BRITNEY PAGLIUCA
County Life Staff

Black Sheep Books is a bookkeeping business that was founded by Faye Mortell of Minden in Oct. 2022. Faye, a graduate of the Small Business Accounting Program at Fleming College, is also in the midst of training her partner Ryan Mortell to better meet the needs of their clients and support their growing business.

Bookkeepers are responsible for managing business' financial accounts so that they have accurate records to file taxes, HST, and payroll remittances, as well as reviewing the fiscal health of the business.

Many people - both small businesses and individuals - may be anxious about filing their taxes because they don't know how or are afraid of owing money to the government. As a result, Faye has found that many people avoid doing so and have years of filing to catch up on. "Don't worry if this is you," she said. "You are not alone."

Faye explained that most people actually get money back after filing their taxes, especially those whose income is from employment.

In addition, filing your taxes allows you to receive other tax credits and benefits. "This includes Old Age Pension, the Canada Child Benefit, the Climate Action Incentive Credit, and so many more," she said.

Faye Mortell of Minden has recently started Black Sheep Books, to help locals with their financial questions and concerns. /BRITNEY PAGLIUCA Staff

Many people are unaware of the tax benefits and credits that they are eligible for, and therefore lose out on potential to save even more. Having someone who is knowledgeable about the process of tax benefits not only reduces the stress of taxes, but also provides an opportunity to both learn and save.

For example, Haliburton County residents are eligible for a tax credit in the occurrence that they must travel over 80 kms for a medical appointment. It incudes a credit towards travel expenses, meals and accommodations after 80 kilometres.

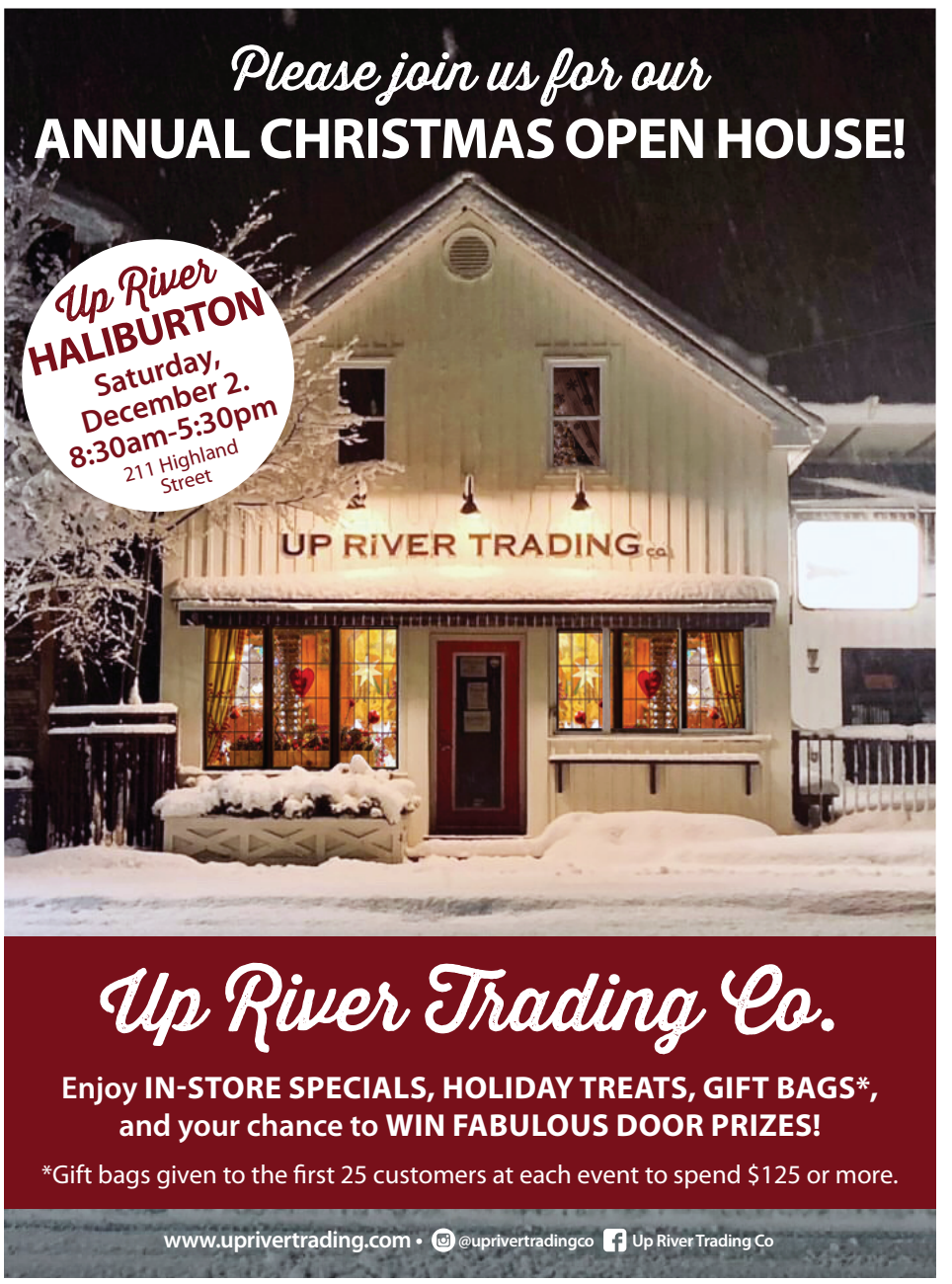
Ryan noted importantly that the interest rate on taxes owed is going up again as of Jan. 1, 2024, to a whopping 10 per cent. Getting your taxes in on time is more pressing then ever, and Black Sheep Books wants to help you save and minimize your worry.

Faye laughed when she explained that she's always looking for ways to charge her clients the least amount of money. "I want small business owners to be as successful and independent as possible," she said, "So we are especially invested in educating small business owners about ways to reduce their tax burden themselves." This includes writing off some meal expenses, car expenses, home office expenses and more.

Supporting small businesses in Haliburton County is one of Black Sheep Books' main priorities. "There are so many people here with exceptional skills and the potential to start a successful business," Ryan said, "but some may be intimidated or unaware of how to manage the financial aspects of being a small business owner."

In addition to supporting small businesses, Black Sheep Books also helps individuals organize and file their taxes. They are seeking new clients with the goal of providing exceptional service, and improving the financial heath of Haliburton County residents.

Faye has prepared a list of documents her clients should gather in order to determine which credits they might be eligible for, and to ease the process as much as possible. If you would like a copy or seek more information, reach out to Faye at faye@blacksheepbooks.net.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Fifteen years of Midwifery Services in Haliburton County

VIVIAN COLLINGS
County Life Editor

For the past 15 years, Midwifery Services of Haliburton-Bancroft (MSHB) have been providing services to families from their building on Victoria Street in Haliburton.

They'll soon have a new home in the Haliburton Highlands Family Health Team building on County Road 1.

"Our goal now is to be really integrative with the community," said registered midwife Annalee Winter. "We love our cozy little home, but this will be a familiar place to lots of people and it's a central and accessible location."

MSHB was founded in 2008 by Rebecca Weeks "in response to the lack of obstetrical services in our area," Weeks said in a statement on the MSHB website.

Winter graduated from the midwifery undergraduate program at McMaster University in 2014, something she took in search for a job with plenty of variety and a way to help people through one of the most significant events of their lives.

Winter and her family moved to Haliburton County in 2016, and knew how important these services are to a small community.

"I was drawn to the diversity in the work and the potential to really get to know families and help people as they're entering parenthood," she said. "It's such a special time to be able to provide information to people 24/7 whenever they need it. Even if we don't have the answer, we can help them get it, and that's really important in a rural area."

The Midwifery Services of Haliburton - Bancroft have been filling a gap in the community for over a decade by offering prenatal, birth services, and postpartum care to individuals in the community. /Courtesy of MSHB

She explained that being present while someone experiences bringing life into the world is nearly indescribable.

"The most rewarding part for me is watching people after birth, after they realize they've birthed this beautiful baby into the world. Seeing their faces is truly the best," Winter said. "The memories stay with you from birth. It's different for everybody of course, but even my grandmothers remember their births so clearly."

Rural challenges

Midwives in Ontario are autonomous primary care providers for pregnancy, birth, and postpartum.

A midwife cares for individuals throughout their entire pregnancy and birth, as well as six week postpartum if a pregnancy is considered low-risk.

"Throughout someone's pregnancy, we're always reviewing things, looking at the whole picture, and if something comes up that's looking to be outside the range of "normal", then we consult with a specialist like an OB to be able to provide them the safest care possible for the pregnant person and their baby," Winter said.

Most prenatal care is done at their clinic.

They perform home births or assist with hospital births depending on the client.

"In Haliburton County, one of the most challenging things is that we don't have a hospital that does deliveries close to us. It's an hour and a half to the Peterborough Regional Hospital, and then there are others that do deliveries that are about the same distance," Winter said.

MSHB midwives have staff privileges at the Peterborough Regional Hospital, so this is usually where their hospital births will take place.

A day in the life

For Winter, no two days are the same.

"Some days, you find me just in the clinic having appointments with clients. They could be at any stage in their pregnancy, so what happens in a day really depends on who I'm seeing," she explained.

Midwives carry out home visits for the first week of postpartum, and then have appointments for the remaining six weeks after.

She always remains on call.

"If someone is in labour or needs an urgent assessment, we sometimes have to rearrange our clinic so I can attend," Winter said. "Your phone is your pager, and you're always waiting to see what's going to happen."

On the days that she's not in the clinic, she will perform home visits, work on paperwork, and organize meetings.

"It's hard in some ways for sure, in terms of committing to your own kids and family to organize plans, but it is never ever boring. It's exciting and stimulating and different all the time."

In Ontario, the four year midwifery undergraduate program can be taken at Toronto Metropolitan University or McMaster.

MSHB is currently looking for more midwives to join the team.

"The problem is that there are so many postings in Ontario and not enough people," she said.

Regularly a team of four, the clinic is now down to two midwives and an administrator with one midwife on maternity leave and one having left the county.

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A beaver walks with a branch. /Submitted by Tammy Nash

Kashagawigamog Lake on a sunny November day. /Submitted by Jill Moulton

Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Tickets for the 2024 Cash Calendar
When: Now until sold out
Where: Multiple Locations
The Haliburton and District Lions Club is now selling tickets for their 2024 Super Cash Calendar. Three draws happen the second Monday of every month from Jan. 8 to Oct. 14, 2024. Visit www.haliburtonlions.com.

Contract Bridge
When: Every Tuesday, 9 a.m. to noon
Where: Minden United Church basement, 21 Newcastle Street
Our weekly contract bridge has resumed. All levels of skill welcomed.

Seniors Chair Exercises
When: Thursdays, at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain Street
Safe and gentle exercises for seniors to help with balance, strength and flexibility. Free to join.

Cribbage and Euchre
When: Tuesdays at 2 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain St.
Cribbage and Euchre at St. George's Anglican Church. With funding from the Government of Ontario. Please contact lynnhiggsthompson@haliburtonanglican.ca for more information.

Highlands Wind Symphony Christmas Concert
When: Dec. 2, 2 p.m.
Where: Northern Lights Pavilion, Haliburton
Join the Highlands Wind Symphony, with the Highlands Swing Band, for their annual Christmas Concert. Tickets are $15 for adults or $30 for a family and are available at Master's Bookstore or at Minden Pharmasave. Text or call 705-457-0455 for more information.

A Merry Little Christmas Market
When: Dec. 2, Noon to 6 p.m.
Where: Burnt River Community Centre, 98 Somerville Centre Road
Come and visit over 30 vendors and discover unique and beautiful Christmas gifts for those on your list. A show with something for everyone!

Holiday Craft Sale
When: Saturday Dec. 2, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Where: Lloyd Watson Center, 2249 Loop Rd, Wilberforce
Christmas items, gifts and baked goods. Lunch will be available. Contact: Barb Schofield, 705-448-2598, Wilberforcebarb@yahoo.ca

Sirch Repair Cafe
When: Dec. 3, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Where: Sirch Bistro, 49 Maple Ave., Haliburton
Bring us your broken items to be fixed for free! Bring textiles, toys, small appliances, computers, jewellery, wooden furniture, and pottery that needs fixing. More information at www.sirch.on.ca or contact us at 705-457-1742 or info@sirch.on.ca

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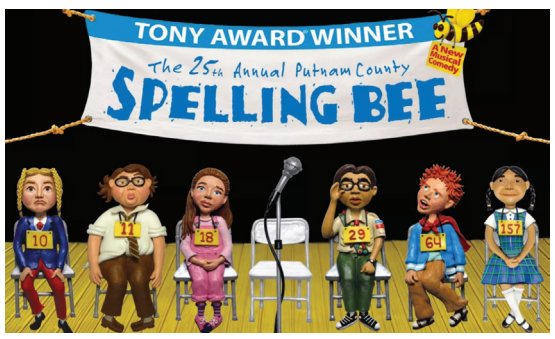
July 2nd to July 11th



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Six awkward spelling champions learn that winning (and losing) isn't everything in this delightful musical An eclectic group of six mid-pubescents vie for the spelling championship of a lifetime. While candidly disclosing hilarious and touching stories from their home lives, the tweens spell their way through a series of words, hoping never to hear the soul-crushing, pout-inducing, life un-affirming "ding" of the bell that signals a spelling mistake. Six spellers enter; one speller leaves a champion! At least the losers get a juice box.

A riotous ride, complete with audience participation, ***The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*** is a delightful hive of comedic and musical genius.

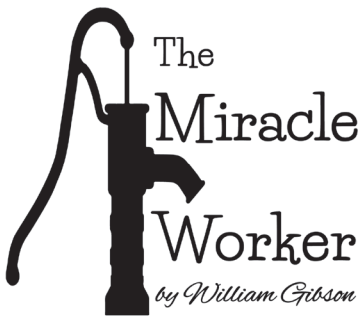
Opens July 2 through to July 11 for nine performances, including two matinees.

July 28th to August 2nd

Sarah, a turkey farmer, has split up with her husband and moved in with her mom, Gail, a beekeeper. Add in Earl, the flirty neighbour, and Ben, an eager young graduate student, and you have the perfect breeding ground for unlikely attractions. Set in adjoining bedrooms, ***The Birds and the Bees*** is a Canadian comedy about love, lust, beekeeping, and the artificial insemination of turkeys.

Six performances from July 28 to August 2.
*(**The Birds & The Bees** contains mature content and discussions of sex.)*

July 15th to July 23rd



Twelve-year-old Helen Keller lived in a prison of silence and darkness. Deaf, blind, and mute from an illness as a baby, with no way to express herself or comprehend those around her, she flew into primal rages against anyone who tried to help her, fighting tooth and nail with a strength born of furious desperation.

Then Annie Sullivan came. Half-blind herself, but possessing an almost fanatical determination, she would begin a frightening and incredibly moving struggle to tame the wild girl no one could reach…Opens July 15 for eight performances including three matinees.

August 4th to August 8th

Back by popular demand, Highland Summer Festival presents Leisa Way ands her Wayward Wind Band with another outstanding concert, ***Opry Gold***. To share the Grand Ol' Opry's history is to share the story of Country Music.

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Five performances starting August 4 to August 8.

July 24th to July 26th

Highlands Summer Festival is delighted to present ***The Good Lovelies***, a Canadian folk/country harmony trio, consisting of Caroline Brooks, Kerri Ough and Sue Passmore. At their core they can be described as a country/folk trio, with tinges of pop, roots, jazz and sometimes hip-hop mixed in.

The group's three members, Brooks from Whitby, Ough from Port Hope and Passmore from Cobourg, were all performing as solo artists in the Toronto area when they came together in 2006 to perform at a Christmas concert at Toronto's Gladstone Hotel. The three subsequently decided to continue working together, releasing their debut EP, Oh My, in 2007. Since then, they have released nine LPs including the latest We Will Never Be The Same in 2023. In 2018, they performed at Massey Hall in Toronto and were nominated for a Canadian Folk Music Award. The trio is on stage for three performances, July 24, 25 and a matinee 26.

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THE MAKE-OVER CONTINUES: The digging, chopping and hacking continues along Highway 35 in Minden. Dramatic changes have taken place north of the Legion Hall where engineers are preparing to install a Bailey bridge to allow for the reconstruction and widening of the present structure. The work is part of project in which the highway will be redeveloped from Highway 121 south to Horseshoe Lake Road One.

Ross Rigney prepares for a new era in Minden Hills

by Matthew Sitler

If Minden Hills was a store, then January first 2001 could very well be nine o'clock in the morning. Yes, that's an open for business sign you see in the window, and that's a new proprietor opening the door. The newly-elected Reeve of Minden Hills Ross Rigney sat down with *The Times* in these pre-buisness hours to reflect upon his campaign and the direction he would like to lead council come that opening day.

Sitting in his living room which looks out onto Canning Lake, Snowdon's current Reeve is the picture of affable determination. He doesn't mince words when addressing political viewpoints near and dear to his heart, nor does he bite at more than he can politically chew. Experienced with and keenly aware of the issues at hand, Rigney feels he is ready to take on whatever responsibilities the top job has to throw at him. "Municipal politics is probably the purest form of democracy," he comments. "I dislike politicians pointing their fingers at Toronto. Here we can't. We're responsible for an awful lot - they may have generic guidelines to guide you, but you're the one making decisions at the local level."

That said, Rigney announces the recent campaign that swept him to power ran rather smoothly. After a bout with prostate cancer earlier this year which threatened to sideline his aspirations, he waited to hear he was in the clear health-wise, then mounted a successful campaign without any looking back.

"I thought 'I'm known in Snowdon, I'm somewhat known in Minden because of the Chamber of Commerce and as the acting CAO of the County, but people still don't know who I am,'" he said. So he stepped into the ring and put his signs out early.

Keeping his campaign straightforward and direct, Rigney said he tried to cut through the verbal diahorea so often utilized by politicians when explaining their platforms. "In a community like this, words of that nature don't mean a lot -- that's big company talk, so I'm very careful about what I say."

With an extensive business background himself, the approach remained unique. The new mail-in vote option promised a higher seasonal vote - something Rigney knew would be a determining factor in the election. He wrote to many seasonal residents and genuinely listened to their concerns. "I hear the complaints all the time -- and I live on a lake -- that they don't have any impact," he stated. "Well you can have the impact this year buddy."

The future

Come the new year, Ross Rigney promises the public an open government that hides nothing. "I'm very much an open person," he says. "That way no one has to answer for things after because everyone knows what that answer is."

Making sure a good working relationship with township employees is maintained tops his list as well. "I want to bring them along in a stronger effort of customer service - they represent my township and the people they have to deal with are their employers," he said. This will be reflected in better service on the phone and at the counter he hopes. "That emphasis has to be 'We are there for the average taxpayer who walks through that door."

Through a lot of door knocking,

(more on page 3)

Mail-in voting

It worked

The mail-in ballot seems to have achieved its main purpose: encouraging more people to participate in the municipal election process.

All jurisdictions throughout the coverage area report an increase in voter participation, in some cases a substantial increase.

In Anson, Hindon and Minden, which will become part of the new municipality of Minden Hills, voter participation jumped to 45.7%. This compares with 18.4% in the 1997 election and 31% in 1994. (the low turn-out in 1997 could be attributed to the fact that there was no race for reeve that year and no issue to capture the interest of the electorate.)

The participation rate was just as high in the other wards of the new municipality of Minden Hills. In Lutterworth 44% of the voters participated, while 41.8% of the voters in the Snowdon Ward cast ballots. This compares with 1997 turn-out of 8.3% for Lutterworth in 1997 (both the reeve and deputy reeve were acclaimed), while in Snowdon, the turnout for the last election was 17%.

The total number of voters in Minden Hills was 5244: 2982 voted in AHM ward; 1428 in Lutterworth Ward and 834 in Snowdon Ward.

Clerk treasurer Tammy McKelvey said, "The mail-in ballot worked. It offered more opportunity for people to vote."

The clerk noted that the mail-in process was very labour-intensive. McKelvey said that the most of the municipal staff time in the two weeks before November 13 was spent handling the ballots. Envelopes had to be opened, declarations confirmed, the voters list checked and ballots sorted into ward boxes. To ensure the integrity of the processes, much of the handling of the ballots involved two or more staff.

Other clerks in the county also reported higher than expected staff involvement. Sherborne/Stanhope clerk Gerald Bain said the election will cost more than anticipated because of the staff time involved. However, he noted that the vote-by-mail procedure appears to have accomplished what it was intended to do...greater participation.

In the northern municipality 39.12% of the voters took part in the election, compared with 30% in 1997. 3207 voters out of a possible 8196 cast ballots.

"With 80% of our voters being seasonal residents, this is a fair way of allowing everyone to participate in the vote," he said. "I was very pleased with the service from Canada Post," Bain said.

(more on page 4)

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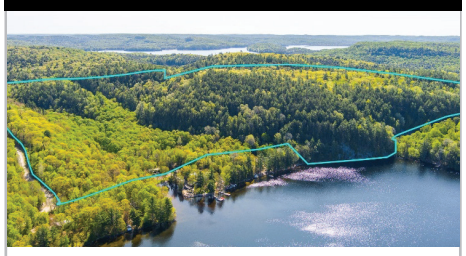

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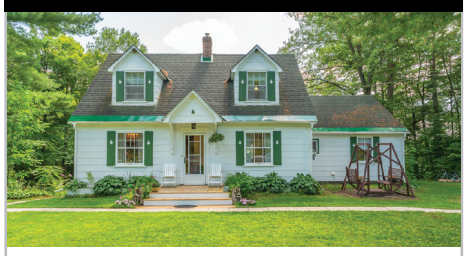

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